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# P O E M S

BY

JAMES RHOADES.

**London**

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## DEDICATION.

---

What is there worth the giving,

That I might give to thee ?

Or meet for thy receiving,

That thou should'st take of me ?

Earth's crowns fade fast in weaving,

Then how should these things be ?

Shall dead men praise the living,

Or slaves the spirit-free ?

It may be now thou sleepest,  
It may be that, to hear  
This struggling song, thou weepest  
For pity tear on tear :  
The world an hour will render  
Of fault-encumber'd fame :  
Wilt thou be still too tender,  
Too mother-like to blame ?

O love of child and mother !  
New loves may wax and wane ;  
But shall we find another,  
Nor time nor tears can stain ?  
From life's august beginning  
Through all her dark extremes  
Sole love that needs no winning,  
Nor wastes in passionate dreams !

Love born of thoughts whose lightning

Scarce lingers in the skies !

Child-memories slowly bright'ning

Through mists of slumb'ring eyes !

What hand so close can hold us,

What lips breathe holier breath,

Till thy dark arms enfold us,

Our second mother, Death ?

I give with tears the verses

In joy kept back from thee :

E'en now my heart rehearses

That hour of promis'd glee ;

But though, the more to endear them,

I write them thine to day,

Ah me ! thou wilt not hear them :

Too far—too far away !

Till this one change have found us,  
The hours their glass forget,  
The old arms linger round us,  
The child-heart holds us yet ;  
But, once this tie dissever'd,  
We gird our loins to go,  
Though lips with love be fever'd  
And feet from sorrow slow.

My bark has slipt her moorings ;  
One bend obscures the bay ;  
New banks with new allurings  
Invite who can to stay :  
High crags and grassy hollows—  
Past both alike we flee :  
Come deep waves or come shallows,  
It must come soon—the sea.



## ODE TO HARMONY.



I.

Spirit of Harmony divine,  
Whom I so long have worshipp'd from afar,  
Not having call'd thee mine,  
Do thou at length draw near,  
And for a little season deign to be  
Lord of all my melody,  
And master of my soul ;  
Whence may the rythmic numbers roll  
In not unworthy lays  
Of thee, who art the universal Whole,  
Of thee, great Spirit, who wast before the days

Of human blame or human praise,  
When all the earth was silent, but for thee,  
Who spakest then in flower and tree,  
In cloud and sky, or running rill,  
In whatsoever was and knew not ill,  
In all things that obeyed the high Creator's will.

## II.

Alas ! of thee how little do we know,  
Or have new strength to learn !—  
Who cannot well discern  
Even in our best endeavour  
Those simpler strains of thine, that round us flow  
For ever and for ever ;  
Even in our purest thought  
We cannot well be taught  
To see and hear thee, Spirit, who dost dwell  
In every hill, in every dell,

Where grasses grow and waters sleep,  
Or where these lightly spring,  
And through the meadows winding bring  
Comfort to flowers that weep—  
Then forward flash and leap,  
And blending on their way  
With all glad things and gay  
In preludes fair and mazy symphonies  
Do such sweet concert keep,  
That at the last they join without surprise  
In the everlasting chorus of the deep.

## III.

The seasons rise and fall,  
And, each succeeding each with more delight,  
Build up the mighty fugue; and, wov'n though all,  
The theme of this their music, "Day and Night,"  
Doth never, never cease;

With thee for king and guide,  
In mystic change they glide,  
And still with sweet return do lessen and increase.

## IV.

We only have fall'n from such a height so low,  
We at the first o'er all created things  
Created kings :  
For look ! with all things else it is not so ;  
The tender flowers thy government obey,  
And, each in order due  
Returning, fill the happy earth alway  
With looks of love and eyes of natural hue.  
The nightingale forgetteth not her song,  
Which God hath taught her with shrill throat to tune  
Deep in the drowsy woodlands, all night long,  
Under the silent moon :  
Out of her sinless heart o'erflows

The joyful thought that bids her sing ;  
She hath no care, no fear she knows  
For what to-morrow's dawn may bring,

And nothing can her touch

With sense of sadness for the former years—

Alas ! our deepest, sweetest thoughts are such

As fill the eyes with tears.

v.

Hence we may no longer hope

Without a touch of pain

To watch the red sun slowly slope

Behind the mountains to the main,

As in the days of old ;

And our heart must blindly grope

To the light that shineth ever

Through darkness blank and cold ;

And if at even we behold

Over some majestic river  
Summer's green or autumn's gold  
By the fitful breezes tost,  
In every shadow we foresee  
A darker that is yet to be,  
And in all tender lights on flower and tree  
The light of Eden lost.

## VI.

Yet, Spirit, grant me this,  
Sometimes to lift me with thy wings  
Far, far above each jarring sound that rings  
On earth's discordant sphere  
To thine abodes of bliss;  
That I may see and hear  
What only true and perfect concord is,  
And what the glorious ending  
Toward which the souls are tending  
Of those whom thou dost perfect and hold dear

## VII.

For oh ! thou hast not left us all alone,

In utter solitude

Upon our ills to brood,

Or faint in searching for a bliss unknown ;

It cannot be that all our love is flown

So far from thee, the source of all our good ;

He knows it, whosoe'er hath stood

But for a moment betwixt heaven and hell,

Doubtful to plunge or climb,

And, in his agony hardly choosing this,

Hath spurned the black abyss,

And up towards heaven achieved his way sublime—

He knows and he remembers well

The rapture of that time ;

When first from his freed spirit fell

A veil more thick than that of cloud

Which hides the mountain from God's face,

When the molten glacier roars aloud,  
And the sunbeams find no peering-place,  
And snowy hurricanes sweep the frosted pine—

Then is given him to divine  
Faultless beauty, and from far  
Music's golden rule to see—

That which was and is to be—  
A perfect love that blends with perfect law :  
Till he has quite forgot his old desire,  
And nothing now seems fair, but only this,  
To soar and sing with that celestial choir,  
Or else on earth to make their service his ;  
And lo ! his own will is no more his own,  
Lost in thy bright and perfect majesty,  
To whom is given the universal rule  
Of earth, and air, and sea ;  
For he beholds thee, Spirit, beautiful,  
And that there is none other like to thee ;



All meaner passions from his breast are flown,  
And in thy light he lives, one glorious hour, alone.

## VIII.

Wherefore the birds may sing,  
The flowers bloom on, the happy waters flow,  
And every loud-lipp'd cave of ocean ring :  
Let all glad things be glad,  
And let the stately seasons come and go,  
Our heart shall not be sad :  
But when thy star-tun'd voices round us roll,  
Or, steep'd in silence of poetic thought,  
We search for God and thee through deeps of soul,  
Albeit for some far-distant end we yearn,  
Thanks for the present trust such hours have taught,  
That thou wilt yet return—  
Wilt yet make earth and heaven and all things thine,  
Spirit, long-lost, divine !

## TO THE SPIRIT OF UNREST.



Thy hands are at my throat, thy knee  
    Knit firm upon my breast ;  
I am spent, I have no more strength to see :  
And thou—what would'st thou more with me,  
    O Spirit of Unrest ?

Time was, thou knowest, I found in thee  
    A master to my mind,  
Chafed under thy light tyranny  
No worse than some chid wave at sea,  
    That bridles to the wind :

O days ! when it was joy and pride,

Waking, to hear thee sing

‘Up ! up !’ or ever at thy side

To sigh or to be weary-eyed

Was an imagin’d thing.

Nay, thy own waves seemed laggard too,

Thy lightnings slow to run,

So swift the new-born wonder grew,—

Till sudden fell the wings that flew,

And life’s desire was done.

Then mad with loss, though lorn of hope,

Thou ledd’st me forth no less,

Too weak to strive—with eyes wide ope

Cast amid life’s charr’d ruins to grope

For childhood’s palaces.

I saw thee still in cloud and grass,  
Short sunshine, shifting snow ;  
I heard thy voice bid summer pass,  
And in my heart thy prayer—‘ alas !  
Would God that all might go !’

Yet thus, while at thy feet I lie,  
My soul one secret knows ;  
And ‘ better,’ my faint lips would cry,  
‘ To toss in tempest-agony,  
Than stagnate in repose.’

Even I, who am grown so weary of thee,  
Shall not be all unblest :—  
Who lacks not, lives not : it may be  
Thou wert the good Spirit to me,  
O Spirit of Unrest !

## ODE TO WINTER.

---

Cold winter, art thou come,  
With all thy savage blasts and shorten'd hours,  
With nothing in thine eyes but starvèd gloam,  
And sad forgetfulness of summer flowers,  
With little on thy lips but moaning drear ?  
Come, saddest that thou art, least lov'd of all the year.

I know that through and through  
Thy bitter, piercing winds will search and leave  
No green upon the boughs, but quite undo  
The web that summer had such toil to weave,  
Then freeze her songs to silence, till no bird,  
Nor any passing stream along the woods be heard.

But now thy breath and face,  
Pale wasted features and devouring tongue,  
Seem fairer than young Spring in all her grace,  
Or Summer wantoning the fields among,  
Sweeter than king-cups crushed with foot of kine,  
Or balmy winds that breathe through forests of the pine.

For what can Summer bring  
That should not make the heart more sad than gay?  
Or what avails the awak'ning voice of Spring  
To boughs long cumber'd with the old year's decay?  
Or what know we of death, that we should borrow  
Comfort of earth's new joy, re-risen from Winter's sorrow?

But think, if only we  
Might lay our hearts, even as the branches, bare,  
Cast our old burdens off like them, and be  
All night abandon'd to thy scourging air,  
How would our lighten'd spirits not droop, as now,  
To watch the year's young fire in every bursting bough!

## S O N G.



Bright snows, like fire on the mountains,  
When the sunbeam shall bid you die,  
It will be but to burst into fountains,  
And over the warm earth fly.

Swift stream, though the sheer rock flout thee,  
From the death of yon cavern deep  
Thou wilt gather thy waves about thee,  
And on, like an eagle, sweep.

We, too, with a blind devotion  
Press onward in trembling trust ;  
But is it to swift, sweet motion ?  
Or to darkness and silent dust ?

## A SON'S COMPLAINT.

---

Sweet Nature, thou hast done me wrong,  
Own mother, I have lov'd thee true,  
Since when, thy flowers and fields among,  
A wondering child I grew,  
  
Till now, when, as thy voices roll,  
I feel the gathering passions throng,  
With thoughts that eddy round the soul,  
And fly for rest to song.



Sometimes thou thrill'st me with delight ;

Thy beauty makes it bliss to be,  
At dead of noon, or when by night  
The stars look gloriously.

And sometimes when the quiet breath  
Of evening on the mountain blows,  
I seem to read thy riddle 'death,'  
So sweet the sadness grows ;

The eyes, that are within the soul,  
Do read a tale that cannot lie :  
For thou hast penn'd it on the scroll  
Of that fair even-sky.

All these thou givest—a kingly dower—  
Yet would I of thy love complain,  
Who dost not soothe in troubled hour  
The poet's heart of pain.

To the tir'd earth night bringeth peace ;

And, when they list, the winds are still ;

The great heart of the grievèd seas

Beats quiet, when they will :

This shore, that tossing sky of thine,

Sleeps safe within the water's breast—

But canst thou calm this heart of mine,

Or teach it so to rest ?



## A SAD THOUGHT.

---

As we pass'd into the valley,  
    Out of heaven a sunbeam sprang ;  
Stream to stream, like silver harp-strings  
    Quivering on the mountains, rang.

Sudden smiled each frowning forehead  
    Of the sun-forsaken hills ;  
Sped the full voluptuous river  
    Proudly to his foaming ghylls.

Only yon dark silent yew-tree  
    To the earth no gladness lent,  
Rising like a thought of sorrow,  
    In the midst of merriment.

## THE TUNNEL.



Out of the tunnel at last, I think !—

Not unlike that of my life, which has run  
Thro' the ribs of this mountain, I might have climb'd,  
But chose the black heart of it hid from the sun.

So all this time I have had no peep

Of the pure bright sea and the flocks abroad,  
Nor sunlight, nor starlight, save some few gleams  
Through shafts in the darkness let down by God ;

Nor sweet air's murmur, nor any rain,

But a chill wind dank with the dews of death,

And, as water-floods break on a drowning brain,

The sound of swift footing and furious breath.

Then to think, as the barren black darkness you reap,

That the hill-tops above with God's morning are red,

Or the pale moon is gathering her stars, like sheep,

Into fair, safe folds of the heaven overhead !

Came a whisper—'still shines thy guiding star ;'

Came a shriek—'this, too, shall avail thee not'—

Like a hull on the sea, whose help is far,

Man-forsaken and God-forgot.

But a moment—a change ! for the black grew to gray ;

The gray slowly quicken'd, till light dawn'd plain—

Earth has seem'd purer, though far less gay,

To the spirit that pass'd through that region of pain.

## TO THE SPIRIT OF BEAUTY.



Oh for wings to follow thee !  
Wings to waft, or feet to flee !  
Though this film of flesh divide thee  
From our eyes, though tempests hide thee,  
Though thy form, for ever flying,  
Lure us but to leave us dying,  
Eyes that strain, and lips that greet,  
Hands that cannot clasp, are sweet ;  
How much sweeter then must be  
Wings or feet to follow thee !

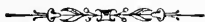
Sometimes, as thou mov'st along,  
We behold thee, and are strong—  
In a young child's happy breath,  
In the after-calm of death,  
In the love that turns to sweetness  
All our spirit's incompleteness,  
In remembrance doubly dear  
From the unseen sepulchre  
Of to-morrow's doubt and fear :  
When the crimson cloud-veil riven  
Bares the holiest place of heaven,  
Where her golden censers shine  
In deep vaults of night divine,  
When the Spring's o'erflowing blood  
Spreads like fire from bough to bud,  
E'er our eyes have learn'd the loss  
Of her first and virgin gloss,  
When the warm wet breezes rust

The rich Autumn's golden dust,  
While the shepherd-south-wind grieves  
O'er his flocks of fallen leaves  
Fed with happier tears, and tended,  
And from withering frosts defended—  
Then thou beckonest 'follow me !'  
And we have no feet to flee.

Whither should we follow thee,  
Spirit of the earth and sea ?  
Thou art near us, thou art far,  
As a flower, or as a star ;  
For thy tears the morning fill,  
And thy foot-prints fire the hill,  
And thy voice is on the wind,  
But thyself we cannot find.  
Like the netted dove that sees  
Heaven o'erhead and shadowy trees,



Like to thirst-slain souls that hear  
Hidden fountains murmuring near,  
Like the flower that silent turns  
Sunward, where the morning burns,  
Following him, though far above,  
With an endless, hopeless love,—  
Chain'd to dust we pant for thee,  
Yearning to be spirit-free.



## TO HESPERUS.



Silent and beautiful and far !  
O thou that in thy rise and setting  
Dost shower down thoughts of peace, pale even-star,  
Whereof is no forgetting,  
'Tis thou that, in the midst of all our fretting,  
With that divine, dispassionate ken  
Art gazing betwixt God and men,  
To mind us whose we are :  
Yea, howsoever fast thyself abiding,  
Yea, distant howsoe'er,  
We sometimes catch the motion softly-sliding  
Of angel-wings through air—  
Of wings from thee descending  
With fair and happy message,  
With bright and holy presage  
That unto all these things there is an ending,  
And unto as a home—we know not where.

## SONG OF A LEAF.

---

O happy bark ! for thou canst go  
Or up, or down the dancing tide ;  
And happy rowers ! while ye row,  
And on your willing oars confide,  
Far past the island-solitude,  
And through the wonders of the wood  
On any night or day.

O happy birds ! that float at ease,  
For hither, thither may ye fare :  
And if the present should not please,  
Content ye wander elsewhere,  
Quite sure to fix your roving mood  
With isle or wonders of the wood,  
Be fickle as ye may.

But as for me, ah ! woe is me !  
For Autumn-winds were wildly blowing ;  
I slipped from off my golden tree,  
Nor saw nor heard the torrent flowing !  
Now borne upon this breathless flood  
I follow far from isle and wood  
My unreturning way.



## TO NATURE.

---

Mother, when the light is dead,  
And the night-throngs round us thicken,  
Are there other joys instead,  
Which the holy dark must quicken ?

Is there any gift of thine  
That may help the heart from madness ?  
Or must life like day decline  
From sadness unto sadness ?

Youth was sweet, and childhood sweeter :  
But man's strength is won with strife ;  
Growth is surely meet, but meeter  
Quaffing of the springs of life :

Hitherto thy gifts we know,

    All so dear, but ah ! so dying :

Wilt thou give us, ere we go,

    Joy that hath no wings for flying ?

Lo ! 'tis thou, and not another,

    From whose life our lips have breath :

Could'st thou send us, oh ! our mother,

    Empty to the doors of Death ?

Nay, nor shall the night disarm us

    Of our last desire and best ;

Thou hast yet one gift to charm us—

    Is it Rest, is it Rest ?

## A SKETCH.



High from above there flowed a silver spring  
Whit'ning with ruin'd foam a rocky bed,  
And here it leapt through its own rainbow-ring,  
And here through boughs that blossomed overhead;  
And fleeing chased itself, and chasing fled,  
Fretting the margin: or with noisy glee  
Down clattering headlong into smoke was shed,  
That, like an April shower, dropped lingeringly,  
And last, its sport-time o'er, slept in the solemn sea.

BY THE ROTHÄ.

---

You ask a song, and I will sing  
Of that sweet day we spent together :  
Green were the banks by Rothä's spring,  
And warm the sunny weather.

We found a quiet cool retreat,  
Such as the simple heart rejoices—  
Green leaves above, beneath our feet  
A brook with many voices :

And there were clouds, that sailed in sleep,  
Of forms and colours never ending ;  
And white with many a cataract's leap  
Far hills to heaven ascending.



Yet sought we not on Fancy's wings  
Of Nature's finer truths to borrow ;  
As men may speak of common things,  
We spake of joy and sorrow :

But so it fell—I know not why—  
That, as the hours went softly stealing,  
Green leaves and mountains, brook and sky,  
Seemed fraught with human feeling.

Enough, there do such hours befall,  
When Nature to the soul is nearest ;  
Why seek, what we can ne'er recall,  
'The power that made them dearest ?

Enough that when these locks are gray,  
And we have spent a life together,  
Our heart sometimes will steal away  
And softly travel thither.

VANITAS VANITATUM.

---

Pleasure, should we borrow  
Fancied joy from thee,  
'T would but fade to-morrow,  
And the third day flee :

Summer, should thy glory  
Some true sweetness lend,  
Thou art transitory,  
And winter makes an end :

Love shall hold us feasted,  
And no traitor prove—  
But what if Love foretasted  
Be more sweet than Love ?

## THE NIGHTINGALE.

---

I was there, and I heard ; for the woods had been  
ringing ;

All day common sounds through the earth did pre-  
vail ;

But they hushed stricken dumb at the voice of thy  
singing,

As it fell from the stars, sweet nightingale.

First a low golden plaint, weak with passion, then  
stronger,

Cry on cry, such as angels flown earthward might  
wake ;

Then a flood, for thy full heart could hold it no  
longer,

Then a pause—that man's heart, were it holy, must  
break.

Yet the beautiful day had no ears to hear thee,  
With her thousand lovers so loud and sweet ;  
When they ceased, then God made the earth to fear  
thee,

And for rapture the day fell dead at thy feet.

O bird ! O wonderful ! where does He hide thee ?

All winter long in what heavenly nest ?

Does He hark to thy singing the while, then chide thee,

That thou givest dull human ears the rest ?

Or else does He beckon thee there to teach thee

Of sorrow and of love's transcendent fire ?

If haply the hearts, through thy song that reach thee,

May to Him and to all blest things grow nigher.

Yea, therefore He has made all thy soul like a fury,  
Thy form half-mysterious, scarce given to the  
sight,  
That thou mightest overflow with the spirit of glory,  
As the great heaven o'erflows with the starry light :  
For to some God has given high contentment in duty,  
Without passion to love, without longing to see ;  
But to those that still pant for the spirit of beauty  
He has given this beautiful earth—and thee.



## THE THRUSH.



There sat a thrush on yon green bush ;

He sang, as the morn uprose,

So sweet a song of love that is strong,

And of sorrow that finds repose,

That my heart with the thorn of anguish torn

Has left one longing only—

To sing to rest some human breast

As unbelov'd and lonely.

## REST.



When the tumult of day is done,  
And the winds are at rest,  
When the glory is all but gone  
In the wonderful west,

Why, heart, is thy trouble so deep ?  
Why, spirit, thy care ?  
Full soon thou shalt quieter sleep  
Than the quietest there.

## THE POET'S CALL.



As ocean calls the river,  
And as twilight calls the day,  
As from this human fever  
Death calls us all away,  
  
As the light winds call each other  
To clear the summer sky,  
And the sweet earth, their own mother.  
Calls the blossoms down to die,  
  
As the warm spring calls the swallow,  
And each wild flower the bee,  
Speak, Voice divine, I follow,  
Speak, and I follow thee.



## A LUCID INTERVAL.

---

It must have been many years ago  
That I stood still here, as I stand to-day,  
Just watching for joy how the waves raced on,  
And for joy too died in a laugh of spray,  
When a man rushed—God ! do I see him still ?  
Ah ! well, but it cannot come over again—  
Rushed up to me breathless, ‘ Behind the hill  
Is a ship lost, in sight of the shore full plain.’  
That man may remember the look I gave,  
Or perhaps thought it only the shock, the surprise :  
Well, the life-boat is out—what hope to save ?  
Two miles ! and they steer for the drowning cries.  
And many a ship no doubt has sown  
Her dead on the floor of the black, blind sea ;  
But in this—and then God, too, must have known—  
Was the love and the dove and the life of me.

## AN OLD ORCHARD.



Seven trees within the orchard grew  
By storm of shower or stealth of dew ;  
Spring broke their blossom into light,  
And when soft Summer had warm'd them through,  
Sere leaves hung there and fruit-balls bright,  
Red-gold against the burning blue.

The wings of many birds all day  
Beat there, and butterflies at play  
Flew circling in the boughs above :  
While on the under-grass there lay  
Soft shapes the winds and sunbeams wove,  
Like dim drown'd flowers that swing and sway.

When, like a sword, the sharp noon-light  
Smote blindly down with fire and blight,  
Their presence stole the heat like dew,  
As when Day's ebbing flood leaves bright  
Her pebbled floor, whose gold shines through  
The deep'ning of the tides of night.

Loud as a lyre of seven sweet strings,  
The swift wind's subtle fingerings  
Swept through them : they loved more to gaze  
Silent, through lifted hands, where springs  
The full moon seen as God's own face  
By shuddering angels through shut wings.

For then the weak moon-wine, that spills  
From her pearl-cup, flows down and fills  
Blanching all night their furrow'd seams,  
And sleeps along their side, and stills  
The hid green heart with silver dreams  
Of Fauns and Fairy-haunted hills.

Till from the mute sky's redd'ning lip  
The sun bursts, like a burning ship  
Far out at sea : then would they wake  
Wind-stirr'd, or startled by the grip  
Of some bird's feet whose silvery shake  
Sets all their dazzling dew's adrip.—

Round them, half-ruin'd, half still upright,  
An old wall ran ; the starr'd eye-bright  
Grew there, and poppies like blood shed,  
Nightshade, and whortles eyed like night,  
And wild-grape vines that clung and fled—  
Each globe's gloom'd velvet touch'd with light.

Wherein if any creature stood  
Of brutish heart or violent mood,  
The colours and calm air could tame  
His nature, and attune his blood  
From baneful thoughts and things of blame  
To what was beautiful and good.

Yea, had one sinn'd the grievous sin  
To have scorn'd love, not liv'd herein,  
Nor worshipp'd any loveliness,  
That hour his whole heart would begin  
To beat with faint new eagerness  
Toward that which in the end shall win.

For all those fruits and flowers, the trees,  
The weak green grasses at their knees,  
Had secret powers to steal away  
Men's hearts to their own harmonies—  
So fared this Orchard, night and day,  
Which God make blossom and increase.

## THE BALLAD OF SIR GUY.

---

Ride, ride, Sir Guy, for the night is late !

*( Wellaway wind ! what song shall be said ? )*

Six miles more to the castle-gate !

*( The flower, the flower o' the world is dead ! )*

O stout Sir Guy rides fiery-fast :

*( Wellaway wind ! what song shall be said ? )*

But heard ye the wailing upon the blast ?

*( The flower, the flower o' the world is dead ! )*

Sir Guy draws bridle, but naught's to hear :

*( Wellaway wind ! what song shall be said ? )*

Now why does the good steed start and rear ?

*( The flower, the flower o' the world is dead ! )*

Oh ! 't was but the raven croaked anigh !

*( Wellaway wind ! what song shall be said ? )*

And a white owl from the wood went by :

*( The flower, the flower o' the world is dead ! )*

Sir Guy rides on past the gloomy mere :

*( Wellaway wind ! what song shall be said ? )*

But wherefore no light in the south chamber ?

*( The flower, the flower o' the world is dead ! )*

“ Sweet Alice, my wife, waits long for me.”

*( Wellaway wind ! what song shall be said ? )*

“ By this she hath borne me a son perdie !”

*( The flower, the flower o' the world is dead ! )*

He has gain'd the bridge where the three streams  
meet :

*( Wellaway wind ! what song shall be said ? )*

But wherefore so dark is the west turret ?

*( The flower, the flower o' the world is dead ! )*

He has thunder'd thorough the sleeping town :

*( Wellaway wind ! what song shall be said ? )*

Ho warder ! and why is the drawbridge down ?

*( The flower, the flower o' the world is dead ! )*

Thy Lady Alice bade so, Sir Guy :

*( Wellaway wind ! what song shall be said ? )*

“ For the sweet Saints may send him ere I die.”

*( The flower, the flower o' the world is dead ! )*

“ Now tell me, where is my wife, Dame Joan ?

*( Wellaway wind ! what song shall be said ? )*

“ And where is the babe I may call my own ?”

*( The flower, the flower o' the world is dead ! )*

The old nurse—never a word spake she,

*( Wellaway wind ! what song shall be said ? )*

But, “ Here is thy son, Sir Guy, for thee !”

*( The flower, the flower o' the world is dead ! )*



## THE HUSH.



The day was loud, the night is still,  
The horsemen are pass'd behind the hill ;  
The winds scarce creep, the children sleep,  
And silent stands the flound'ring mill—  
All, all gone ! sweet nightingale,  
All gone ! sweet moonlight pale.

## SONG-BIRDS IN FEBRUARY.



Still so loud among the bushes,  
Ye merry-hearted Thrushes !  
Though the summer is long sped,  
And the streams are stark and dead,  
While cold the North-wind rushes !

Ha ! Redbreast, thou song-lover !  
With no leaf thy spray to cover,  
Still a-singing !—dost thou know  
That the buds again must blow,  
And the chainèd waters flow  
Through fields of corn and clover ?

Ye must know it, and believe it,  
And in your heart receive it,  
That a dawn will come so gay  
As neither night shall scare away,  
Nor winter-howlings grieve it.



## LOVE AND REST.

---

Flower that followest all day long  
Tearless-eyed thy lover bright,  
Sun-flower, thou whose love is strong,  
And whose sleep is light,

Flowers I know that softer shine,  
And with eve as calmly close,  
But what passion like to thine  
That turns to like repose ?

I know love, the loves of men,  
Slow to waste, though sore to keep ;  
I have heard their sighs, and then  
I have seen them sleep ;

But oh ! sunflower, ask not me  
If there dwell in human breast  
Such a grace of Constancy  
With such a gift of Rest.



## FROZEN AT THE HEART.



Yes, the forest-brakes are bursting,  
And the river runs its swiftest,  
And the sunbeams quench their thirsting  
In bright dew ; the lark thou liftest  
Shouting to the skies in madness,  
Happy wind, that, like a spirit  
Inarticulate for gladness,  
Pausest on thy cloud to hear it.  
Blessed ye ! who now inherit  
Your full powers, though transitory,  
Darken'd by no foul demerit,  
Sadden'd by no human story—  
As for me, behold me bringing  
Silence on my lips for singing,  
Clouds within my heart for glory.

## SONG.



The mists are drawn to the blue sky ;

The white streams gather to the sea ;

And I, too, could not choose but fly,

My own dear love, to thee :

Soft winds breathed of thee, as in dream ;

The still stars nightly looked of thee ;

The sweet field's scent was thine, the stream

Ran laughing that such joy should be.

By all these things I knew that thou

Wast somewhere waiting, sweet, for me :

And lo ! I needs must follow now,

And live and die with thee.

## HOPE.



Cloudy heart, why whisperest thou  
To the leaden wave beneath thee ?  
Dost thou pine from anguish now  
In its sullen depths to sheathe thee ?

Stream, my heart and thou are like—  
All too dull in cheerless weather :  
Clouds will vanish ; suns will strike ;  
And ye both shall shine together.



## DESPAIR.



Now, Joy and Hope, good night !  
Good night, a weary pair !  
And, as a raven lustrous-black and rare  
Doth slowly at some cavern's mouth alight,  
Rent by the thunder-blare,  
So now my heart, Despair,  
Bids thee float in upon thy wings of night,  
Float calmly, darkly in, and fear no light,  
Nor other tenant there.

## SPRING.



See ! the anguish of Earth with Winter closes—

The wet cold tears and the crowns of thorn ;

And Spring lights the flames of the pale primroses,

Dim like to torch-fires at flush of morn :

For Spring walks forth with a brand fresh-lighted,

Touching each spot where the flowers are few ;

And those that by Winter were quench'd or blighted

Kindle and burst into flame anew.

And all gentle sounds, to the hour belonging,

From her feet and her forehead are softly shed,

And wafts of sweet odours, the mild air thronging,

Mix till the sense is bewildered.

She has call'd to the streams, and they answer faintly,  
Not quite unafraid of the frost's fierce lip ;  
Yet they laugh to themselves as they follow her gently,  
For gladness of her sweet fellowship.

Then the old Earth wakes from her sleep of horror,  
And her heart, like the youngest, beats fresh and  
new ;  
For she knows that the long sweet Summer is before  
her,  
Summer, and the gold-hair'd Autumn too.

Yes, the wail and the anguish of Earth now closes :  
Who doubts, let him hear what the black-bird saith :  
For Spring gets more joy than Winter loses,  
When God wakes the flowers from their dream of  
death.

## A FAREWELL.

---

A long farewell ! great heart and true,  
Too great to care for human spite ;  
They could not love so fine a light,  
A brightness which they never knew :

Yet, though thy clay returns to clay,  
Unvoiced within the silent tomb,  
The man we loved will pierce the gloom,  
And speak with us for many a day ;

Will leave a light more glorious yet,  
But softer, as the day is done ;  
That they, who could not see thy sun,  
May love thy beams when thou art set.

## THE FLOWERS SURPRISED.

---

How still they seem to blossom there—  
The flowers our woodland-bank o'er-brimming !  
Yet once I caught them unaware,  
Ere they could hush their hymning :  
Drunk with the sun, though mix'd with dew,  
To look, to listen, they forgot ;  
I saw— alas ! how brief a view !—  
The ground enchanted where they grew,  
And heard—ah me ! but what ?  
A song that was so heavenly-gay,  
It fled from human ears away,  
A speech so spirit-pure and good,  
I could not tell it if I would.

## CLOUD-LIFE.



From the world's noise, last night,

And from its shows, that lie,

I was uplifted by a light,

And a splendour in the sky—

Red waves of fire for storm,

And a rosy isle for rest,

And many a golden, gracious form—

But one that I loved best—

So small, you scarce could find it,

But so sweet, till it was gone ;

For a light of Life enshrined it,

As it meekly travelled on.

## THE ATMOSPHERE OF POETRY.



Like cloudy shapes, that float or lie  
Beneath still depths of azure sky—  
Dull dream-like forms, that have their birth  
And semblance from the insensate earth,  
Till, mix'd with heaven, they learn to share  
The pulses of the purple air,  
So round the poet's feet are roll'd  
Dim fancies, colourless and cold,  
Skirting the lustral deeps, that lie  
Within his soul's transparent sky,  
And are not fleet, themselves, or fair,  
Till mix'd with that refulgent air.

## WINTER-MUSIC.



My heart is ev'n a desert-grove,  
Where not a wild bird sings of June,  
Nor ever nightingale her love  
Thrills darkling to the thronèd moon :

When suns are warm, and soft winds sleep,  
When Glory walks from glade to glade,  
Then most of all dread silence deep  
Doth that mysterious heart pervade :

But should soft skies be changed to rude,  
Rough Eurus for the zephyr blow,  
Should all chill powers in malice-mood  
Forbid the frozen sap to flow,

These boughs, that silent slept so long,  
Awake, and shudder into song.



## TWO CHARACTERS.

---

See there ! for this man, too, life's toil is over ;  
His words are all said out ; his deeds are done ;  
For this man, too, there comes a rest, however  
Unquiet passed his time beneath the sun.

You said what seemed you best ; your life's poor  
fountain

Just bubbled, whilst his soared or shuddered down ;  
You chid him as a tir'd boy chides a mountain ;  
You frowned on him, and thought God, too, must  
frown.

His worst thought was so great, your best so little,  
Your best and worst not yours, his all his own ;  
You ran the world's safe way ; he dared to thwart it ;  
You stood with thousands by you, he alone.

Wherefore, when God shall judge the world, I take it,  
He will not mete this man by rule and line,  
Who felt no common thirst, nor feared to slake it  
From that which flowed within him—the Divine :

Or think you God loves our tame levell'd acres  
More than the proud head of some heaven-kiss'd  
hill ?

Man's straight-dug ditch more than His own free river,  
That wanders, He regarding, where it will ?

Enough—high words abate no jot or tittle  
Of what, while man still lasts, shall still be true—  
Heaven's great ones must be slander'd by Earth's  
little,

And God makes no ado.

## A PORTRAIT.

---

There he goes, as you say, like a madman !—

His clothes all awry,

And a fine lofty scorn for things human

In forehead and eye.

Poor man that scarce owns an acquaintance !

If he had but a friend

Just to tell him straight out in one sentence

How matters will end !

When body and mind have gone mouldy,

'T were something to say

“There now, you would have it ; I told ye ;

You would not obey :

What fruit ever came of such dreaming,

But despondence and fear ?"—

Hark now ! better hush this blaspheming,

Lest an angel should hear.

Poor man ?—Aye indeed, for his mortal

Is quench'd in divine :

Meanly clad ?—but may be at Death's portal

His raiment will shine.

Scornful-eyed ?—Why that eye pierces thorough

Both your slanders and you :

Sad ?—Yes, for he knows of the sorrow

God gives unto few.

There he goes, as you say, but no fool he,

With One for his friend ;

And I fancy He knows somewhat truly

‘ How matters will end.’

## THE POET AND THE PEOPLE.



You care not for the splendour and the passion,  
The march of music and the glow of speech—  
Would rest, not strive, content with this world's  
fashion,  
To heights beyond your reach.

“Some must do earth's real work—we fain would do  
it—

Be dull and humble some, not soar and shine :  
What part have we with painter or with poet,  
Things earthly with divine ?”

So 't is to-day, so yesterday ; to-morrow

The same fool's fable will be sung again ;

You dream not that the Artist's school is sorrow,

The Poet's teacher Pain.

'T is you that gape at heaven, scorn earth below it—

Your human nature narrow'd to a span :

Heaven cannot teach you, if earth fail to show it,

The majesty of man.

The soaring bird stoops lowest ; base things and noble,

The seer sees each and all with human eyes,

Cuts deeper through life's rock, intent to double

The striving and the prize.

You call his life 'calm,' spent in Truth's high quarrel,

His songs 'sweet,' that in blood and pain were born ;

You think not of the brows beneath your laurel

Red-bleeding from the thorn :

You choke life's meaning out — love, tears, and  
laughter—

With vague, mad visions of some cold Ideal ;  
He, looking, trusts or doubts the dread Hereafter,  
But knows that Now is real.

You give him praise for some strange star, some  
comet

Across your skies of alien birth and breath ;  
God gives him life, to plunge into and plumb it  
Even to the dregs of death,

Aye, gives him, over all, his bliss, to know it,  
And, under all, his gulfs of pain to span—  
Not more 'divine,' but most supremely Poet,  
When most intensely Man.

## THE TWO PATHS.



Thus far then side by side  
The self-same path we've plied—  
Our hope, our prospect and horizon one :  
Now this new path I choose ;  
Yet blame not, nor accuse,  
But, parting, bid me in God's name go on.

For still by day or night,  
Through travail and delight,  
With men, or talking with the earth and sea,  
I find no written rule,  
No form of creed or school,  
But something that beats here is more to me.



'T is bitter so to part ;  
But falsehood to the heart  
Shoots bitterer arrows barb'd with self-disdain :  
The beaten ways are sweet,  
Worn by a thousand feet—  
Not with old foot-prints be my path made plain !

Think not the Eternal Good  
Is measur'd by man's rood,  
His thoughts scann'd, as the stars are, one by one ;  
No prophet, saint, or sage  
Shall sum up Truth, or gauge  
God's purpose ripening while the ages run.

In crocus and in rose  
Though the same sunshine glows,  
One flower waves crimson, and one trembles gold :  
Dost thou alone claim sight ?  
Is Love less free than Light ?  
Love's rays in human hearts less manifold ?

Nay, yet through scorn and hate  
We hail but one thing great,  
One power, the universal heart approves :  
With Love's free sandals shod  
Man's feet may find out God,  
Far from the world's great ways and echoing grooves.



## FAILURE.



Victor, from the fight disrobing !

Lover, now that heaven's attain'd !

Ere the shouts be lost in sobbing,

The clear heaven with storm-cloud stain'd,

Mind ye 'mid your golden sunset,

Or triumphant trumpet's sound,

Hearts as brave, yet brok'n in onset,

Lovers, but with love uncrowned ?

Heed not ; pay no vain recital,

Tithes of pity, praise, or tears—

Glorious in their unrequital,

Richer for the world's arrears !

Though your fame wax old before ye,  
    Though Love's leaf with frost be curl'd,  
Justice bares for these her glory,  
    Veil'd but from the vulgar world ;  
  
Where they strawed, who reap but stubble,  
    Silent and unseen She stands,  
With a look that makes more noble  
    Than the kiss of sceptred hands ;  
  
And a crown She weaves for ever—  
    Bloodless thorn and sweeten'd rue—  
For each noble lost endeavour  
    Of the souls that died to do.

## PYGMALION'S STATUE.

---

O that story of the statue !

Statue shaped with art so rare  
That your sculptor, gazing at you,  
Loved, in spite of the despair,  
Till sweet Art took Nature's breath,  
Lent you life, and gave you death !

While he sighed " Ah ! fond beginner,  
If indeed your hands wrought well,  
Beauty should catch life within her—  
Bird-like break its ivory shell"—  
One more touch—her breast behold !  
Tremulous in the garment's fold.

But while fear and rapture mingled,  
And the swift surprise of seeing,  
How those shuddering pulses tingled  
“ With the first faint flush of being,  
Out he bursts with sudden cry—  
“She will change, grow old, and die.”

So to gain her was to lose her,  
So to quicken was to kill :  
Heart-enshrin'd, Love sleeps ; but, use her,  
She will wake to perish still—  
Yet would I—who would not ?—choose  
So to gain and so to lose.

## ON THE DEATH OF ARTEMUS WARD.

---

Is he gone to a land of no laughter—

    This man that made mirth for us all ?

Proves Death but a silence hereafter,

    Where the echoes of Earth cannot fall ?

Once closed, have the lips no more duty ?

    No more pleasure the exquisite ears ?

Has the heart done o'erflowing with beauty,

    As the eyes have with tears ?

Nay, if aught be sure, what can be surer,

Than that earth's good decays not with earth ?

And of all the heart's springs none are purer

Than the springs of the fountains of mirth ?

He that sounds them has pierced the heart's hollows,

The places where tears are and sleep ;

For the foam flakes, that dance in life's shallows,

Are wrung from life's deep.

He came with a heart full of gladness

From the glad-hearted world of the West,

Won our laughter, but not with mere madness,

Spake and joked with us, not in mere jest :

For the Man in our heart lingered after,

When the merriment died from our ears,

And those who were loudest in laughter

Are silent in tears.



## A F A C T .



Scarce seven days since God saw go forth

A child in girlhood's beauty,  
To do, whate'er its little worth,  
Her simple task of duty :

She has left the cottage gay and glad,—

No fear, no thought of horror,  
But child-like thinking how she had  
The whole bright Spring before her.

God saw her go—sees all, we trust—

No deed to Him mis-stated,  
Yet knew, oh ! think, how blood and lust  
His little one awaited.

You say 'mere blasphemy to think ;'

I say, though lip scarce brave it,

He saw His child tread hell's red brink,

And stretched no hand to save it.

And mark ! small need of marvels here—

How simple the solution !

Some brute-scent of discovery near,

Brute-fear of retribution,

One child-like impulse on her way

By that dark house to have hasted—

Hell's trump had chok'd one triumph-bray,

One life less sere and blasted.

Will ye sink back then ?—take your ease ?—

Sigh 'needs must come offences ?'—

Trust to your pious 'if God please,'

And special Providences ?

Or is He wrath—for lack of prayer

His little ones forsaking ?

Why, cry aloud then, cry, nor spare,

He sleeps and needs awaking.

Shout ! leap ! what fiery signal shone ?

What voice from heaven rewarded ?

‘No voice,’ at even shall ye moan,

‘Nor any that regarded.’

‘Yet He is Love’—I know it, and fain

Would trust Love’s dark revealing—

His law burnt through us, that human pain

Through human help find healing.

Out on false faith ! Come teach who can !

Nay, Preacher, spare your trouble,

Show first what beauty lives in man,

And what in life is noble ;

Throw wide their heart to the warm sun,  
Make place for light and pleasure,  
Teach them life's gain on earth begun,  
Then talk of heavenly treasure—

Thy law burnt through us ! Oh ! strong and good,  
How hard Love's task to engrave it !  
Thou that must see Thy lamb's shed blood,  
And stretch no hand to save it !



## NATURE'S TASK IN MODERN TIMES.

---

Ah ! do we sometimes sigh to be

Like those of old, who dwelt and sang  
Where holier streams and haunted sea  
To Nereid and to Naiad rang ?

And all earth's riper gains forego—

Faith, knowledge, light, and liberty,  
So were it ours, like them, to know  
That life is lovely, ere we die ?

Our years in reckless haste are spent,

Our springs of life too quickly dried—  
Borne onward by each hour's event,  
Or victims to the advancing tide :

New laws are ours ; new arts we know,  
New stars in heaven, they saw not shine :  
But where is fled the warmth, the glow,  
That made the very grass divine ?

Enough, it can be so no more ;  
The days of golden calm are dead ;  
Gone are the sea-nymphs from the shore,  
The Oreads from the mountain-head :

Say, hath she ceased to minister  
Rest to man's toil, and balm for pain ?  
Loves Nature those who love but her  
As some mere mistress, light and vain ?

Nay, like the Spartan mother, she  
The recreant from her breast would spurn,  
Bidding him strive to death, if he  
The guerdon of her love would earn.

And as a child, who starts in fright  
From drifting agonies of dream,  
Sees slowly with returning sight  
His mother in the morning beam,

So from life's feverish whirl awaked  
I glad my wondering eyes with thee,  
Till thought is calmed and spirit slaked  
With murmurs of the eternal sea.

Yes, for through suffering we may win  
Peace, that to them thou couldst not give :  
Fresh from the mad world's dust and din,  
Our lips are fain to drink and live ;

Our eyes old custom cannot blind  
To beauty ; but when toil has end,  
And we are satiate of mankind,  
To walk with Nature as a friend—

Bathe in her light, and breathe her life—

Such profit of our pain have we,

Whose ears are vex'd with inland strife,

Whose ways are seldom by the sea.





## A FAREWELL ODE.



Comrades, I bid you weep ;

Save this, there is no solace left to show :

In all fair harvests that our hands shall mow,

Henceforth the master-reaper will not reap.

Idle it is 'gainst adverse fates to strive,

And with vain effort still keep grief alive :

There is a time for tears too, as for sleep—

Let your tears flow.

Brothers, I bid you sing,  
Because Truth fails not, though the great go by,  
And those frail souls, that win to her on high,  
Abide unvex'd by vain imagining.  
Low at her feet the white waves howl for hate ;  
She is so calm and they so passionate.  
Let us be glad together for this thing—  
Truth cannot die.

Children, I bid you pray ;  
So, though we look not on his like again,  
Maybe his memory will our hearts sustain,  
And some pure portion of his spirit stay.  
This, too, he taught us ; and 'tis no light gift  
To souls sore-blinded by the tempest-drift—  
That who on heaven's high succour wait away,  
Wait not in vain.

Once more, I bid you peace.

How should weak song put sorrow out of sight ?

There are who clamour at love, and curse the light ;

Silence alone is holy till they cease.

Yea, oh ! our Master, for ourselves and thee

Sweet is the silence, since joy may not be—

God of thy day's work give thee fair increase,

And a good night.



## MEMORY.



I am born of the early sweet shadows,  
    'Mid the bubbling of birds and of streams ;  
As morn breaks the mists from the meadows,  
    I move through the dark of your dreams.  
Fair am I, as the feet of Aurora,  
    Yet pale, like the garments of eve ;  
I am Ceres, and I am Pandora,  
    To heal with my gifts or to grieve.

In the depth of primeval abysses,  
Where the soul is not shapen to dwell,  
I quicken the dark with vague blisses,  
Strange visions of heaven or of hell :  
As the cloud-veils slow-bright'ning surrender  
Dawn's secret at last to the sea,  
So pale out of night, and so tender  
The faint far arising of me.

As the moon, when the sun is departed,  
Makes glorious the regions of gloam,  
I am life to the desolate-hearted,  
To the wanderers hope and a home ;  
I can cheer when all lovers forsake you,  
I can poison your mirth with despair :  
If ye mount up to heaven, I o'ertake you,  
Or plunge down to hell, I am there.

As ye watch where, to sink and to sunder,  
Time's billows break fast on the strand,  
I reveal the bright floor-way thereunder,  
Mesh'd curves of the sensitive sand :  
Old foot-prints are plain—ye may trace them—  
Strewn spilth of life's bountiful urn ;  
Ye may rue, but can never erase them,  
And mourn, but ye shall not return.

All the lore of past infinite ages—  
Man's wisdom for ages to be—  
I have writ on Earth's adamant pages,  
My dark sayings in deeps of the sea.  
Night and silence weave veils to enfold me,  
But I pass to your spirit through these ;  
In the setting of suns ye behold me,  
And hear in the sighing of trees.

Not of earth is the succour I send you,

Oh ! ye creatures of transient breath !

As an angel of light I attend you

To the gloom of the gateway of Death :

But I pass from his shadowy portal,

To finish what first I began—

Making radiant with footsteps immortal

The path of ephemeral man.



## THE TRUE GREATNESS.

---

Not bewilder'd, though fate have bereft us  
Of the strength we had counted our own,  
Not dismay'd, though the sunlight have left us  
At noontide alone.

No, nor stunn'd with the stroke of our sorrow,  
Though, 'mid perils and pestilent air,  
We may seek where the heart loved to borrow,  
And help is not there.

“Scanty praise !” do you cry, shallow reader ?  
“Weak worship, scarce better than scorn !  
Will ye praise him for lord and lost leader,  
Whose loss can be borne ?



Is the hero not great by the token

That without him no work can be well,

As the arm of the Spartan fell broken,

When Brasidas fell ? ”

Oh ! but is it not, comrades, his glory,

That we dare look alone on the foe ?

That ye cried, as he went out before ye,

God help us ! but go ?

Man worships the splendours that blind him,

Then vanish ; but show me, who can,

One that leaves his own greatness behind him—

This, this is the man.

## THE BALLAD OF LITTLE MAISIE.

---

“ Mother, mother, I’m weary o’ bed :

*( White apple-blooms blown on the orchard-floor ! )*

The sun shines sweet through the curtain-head :

*( And oh ! hereafter and herebefore ! )*

“ Do on my clothes, my own mother dear,

*( White apple-blooms blown on the orchard-floor ! )*

My bonnet fine with the gay feather :

*( And oh ! hereafter and herebefore ! )*

“ My velvet shoon bring hither to me :

*( White apple-blooms blown on the orchard-floor ! )*

And eke my gown of the cramoisie :

*( And oh ! hereafter and herebefore ! )*

“ Come, Sister Janet, to the hawthorn-bush :

*( White apple-blooms blown on the orchard-floor ! )*

We will listen and look for the dappled thrush.

*( And oh ! hereafter and herebefore ! )*

“ We will gather the cowslip and blue-bell,

*( White apple-blooms blown on the orchard-floor ! )*

The cuckoo-pint and the periwinkle.

*( And oh ! hereafter and herebefore ! )*

“ With the flowers we’ll make a wreath for my head ;

*( White apple-blooms blown on the orchard-floor ! )*

And Willie and I for play will wed.”

*( And oh ! hereafter and herebefore ! )*

“ But Maisie, my darling, Maisie, my dear,

*( White apple-blooms blown on the orchard-floor ! )*

Through the open window the thrush sings clear.

*( And oh ! hereafter and herebefore ! )*

“ Maisie, my child, my maiden sweet,

*( White apple-blooms blown on the orchard-floor ! )*

The grass is o’erlong for your tender feet.”

*( And oh ! hereafter and herebefore ! )*

“ But last year, my mother, you said not so :

*( White apple-blooms blown on the orchard floor ! )*

But last year you were fain to let me go.

*( And oh ! hereafter and herebefore ! )*

“ ’T is sweet to be out in the summer hours :

*( White apple-blooms blown on the orchard-floor ! )*

I should like to lie all day in the flowers.”

*( And oh ! hereafter and herebefore ! )*

\* \* \* \* \*

“ All day, all night in the flowers, my child,

*( White apple-blooms blown on the orchard-floor ! )*

Through summer sweet, through winter wild !

*( And oh ! hereafter and herebefore ! )*

“ Ye may draw the curtain close, Willie,

*( White apple-blooms blown on the orchard-floor ! )*

Little Maisie will no more wed with thee.

*( And oh ! hereafter and herebefore ! )*

“ Ye may make the chamber dark, Janet ;

*( White apple-blooms blown on the orchard-floor ! )*

And would God for me it were darker yet ! ”

*( And oh ! hereafter and herebefore ! )*



## TRANSLATION

FROM MDME. EMILE DE GIRARDIN.



Angel all-discerning,  
Thou, whose fiery eyes  
Pierce the heart's hid yearning,  
Tell me all his sighs :

Say, while braving danger  
On the wrathful sea,  
From his home a ranger,  
Where in thought is he ?

When his white sails shimmer,  
Fluttering to the gale,  
When the gold star-glimmer  
Lights the waters pale,

When he gazes lonely  
O'er the stormless sea,  
If his heart sigh only,  
Of whom then dreams he ?

When the storm-cloud mutters  
On the breast of Night,  
And the deep wave utters  
Voices of affright,

If in fear and wonder  
Peril strange he see,  
'Mid the threatening thunder,  
For whom trembles he ?

## TO THE DAISY.



I choose thee from a thousand flowers,  
Fair trampled star of English meads ;  
Thou, simplest-born of Summer hours,  
Hast help for deepest human needs :

Not that thy light illumines the blind,  
Or makes the sensual heart to glow,  
But for the wisest fail to find  
The power that bids thee sun-ward blow.

We peer through all thy tiny frame,  
From dark green stem to golden disk ;  
And Science slays thee for a name,  
With deadlier eye than basilisk ;



All, all thy members in her book  
Are written, see, with endless pains :  
We think to learn thee at a look,  
But still the mystery remains.

Ah ! simple flower, unknown to grief,  
That, when thy summer-days are done,  
Through dauntless hope and long belief  
Art first to greet the April sun ;

Great Science, though she count thee blind,  
A truer insight learns from thee—  
E'en where she falters most to find  
A more sublime philosophy.

Whenas with half-uncover'd cup,  
Yet fearful of the wintry chill,  
To that dear Sun thy heart goes up,  
Who knows to fill it, and who will ;

How, like a cage-escapèd bird  
New-wak'd 'mid forest leaves to sing,  
Thy gentle sense is tun'd and stirr'd  
To all the harmonies of Spring !

The balmier air, the softer sod,  
The whisper as of wings that heal—  
Thy measure of the gifts of God—  
What need to prove it ? thou canst feel :

No fruit of knowledge deadly-fair,  
With foretaste sweet and after-dole,  
E'er touched thy lips and turned to air,  
And left the hunger on thy soul.

Ah ! yet, to love the light were much,  
To wait on heaven through alter'd skies—  
Such is a daisy's faith, and such  
The wisdom of the truly wise ;

More certain truth ye may not find—

Let this be ours till life be done,

A patient heart, a lowly mind,

An eye fix'd ever on the sun.



## NIGHT.



Night followed passionless and still ;

God laid 'the frolic breezes by,

With rose and gold upon the hill,

And rose upon the sky ;

And tir'd trees stretched their arms and slept,

And flowers contented closed their eyen :

Then forth from their long hiding crept

The new-wak'd stars to shine :

Only the birds would not forget

Their singing and the gladsome day,

And as for me—mine eyes are wet

For sweet hours fled away.

# SONNETS.



## I.

Shall I forget thee when the Spring comes back,  
And the green mists begin about the trees,  
And cling, and brighten ; when no heart has lack  
Of living, and no ear of melodies,  
And no eyes weary of the rainless air ?  
The world grows sweeter than a heart can bear,  
'Live with white violets, whose breath has made  
Earth like a pillow where young heads are laid,  
Fragrant and frail and hid in their warm hair ;  
When all sweet flower-scents rise, like happy rhymes  
From golden memories of olden times,  
And out of death springs life, and joy from pain,  
And laughter to young lips, and love to men—  
Shall I forget thee then, forget thee then ?

## II;

Nature, when I deplore the fates that bind  
My spirit to a life unlov'd by thee,  
My limbs to pace this narrow room, my mind  
To hour on hour of dull monotony,  
When I recall how glorious and how free,  
Lost on thy mountains amid wave and wind,  
To learn the blessedness of hearts that find,  
Of ears that hear thee, and of eyes that see—  
Then dream that I am fall'n beneath thy frown,  
Doom'd to be no more with thee, no more wise—  
What joy to think, thine too these common skies,  
This field—thy finger wove its floral crown ;  
Oh ! mother, thine this silence that comes down,  
And bears the nightingale's great song, and dies !



## III.

Schumann, who dares to mount with thee, must dare  
Of pain and peril all a man may know,  
Battle and the cry to them that will not spare  
Their charioting—glory and blood and woe ;  
And inarticulate passion moaning low,  
Mix'd with mute calms and holy quietings,  
That one might say, “ fire and the flight of wings  
Through heaven beside his feet are slack and slow ;”—  
Hope, with an utter sadness creeping through,  
Joy, that for ever coming comes not quite,  
And seething of black clouds more black than night,  
And heights of blessedness more pure than snow,  
Where one plunge downward bringeth to the brink  
Of passionless despair—but who would shrink ?

## IV.

I saw a lark mount up from earth to heaven,  
When thunder and fierce lightnings were abroad :  
With one bright crash the neighbouring oak was riven,  
And bent knees trembled in the House of God.

The white-rob'd choir a solemn chant they sang—  
“ Lord, let me know the number of my days : ”  
But fiercer overhead the lightning sprang,  
And blacker darkness swallowed up the blaze.

Then rose the bird—through all that storm she flew—  
So large her love, and such a heart to sing !  
And poured the sweetest of all songs she knew,  
And shamed the frown of heaven with fearless wing :  
When she returned, I looked—the skies were clear—  
And listened—but no thunder could I hear.

## V.

Whenas my heart would fain break out in song,  
Ev'n as the full buds burst in merry May,  
Then comes a frost with breath so cruel-strong,  
It dares not ope or blossom to the day.

All furious winds do seem to rage in air ;  
From North and South are passions without rest,  
And keen Regret from the wild East is there,  
And Zephyr-Hope blows faintly from the West :

Where flowers have been, deep lies the drifted snow,  
Nor I can sing, nor any bird to-day :  
Half-froz'n itself the stream of Love runs slow—  
Is Summer dead ? or hath she lost her way ?—

When this is so, when Winter will not flee,  
What should I do but fly, my Spring, to thee ?

## VI.

Lift high the torch of Science ; let it wave !  
Search out the coming and the going wind ;  
Read ye the secrets of the eternal Mind,  
And go forget the eternal Heart that gave !  
Ev'n now men sow and reap, and thank not God ;  
“ Earth and her cloud obey but natural laws—  
What need of thanks ?—Effect but follows cause,  
And suns must shine upon the moisten'd sod.”  
Ah ! not for these the song of the wild lark,  
And worship, and the worth of all that is !  
But, God, thou knowest in Love is our best bliss,  
In Knowledge not, albeit a heavenly spark.  
Give Light and Love—else, if they will not this,  
Put out their candle, God, and leave them dark.

## VII.

I saw in dream where met proud rivers twain  
From the East and West—one without storm or stain,  
Clear-eyed and paved with crystal, as to glass  
The merest speck that in the air might pass  
Above it; the other, from remoter springs,  
Soil'd with long travel and passionate outgoings,  
Full-vein'd and swell'n with ore from the iron rock,  
Impetuous sped to meet it: at the shock  
Earth reeled, and heaven grew dark with sudden gloam  
Above the impenetrable spray. What wonder,  
If men's eyes, baffled by the blinding foam,  
Saw not beyond, where 'scaped the smoke and  
thunder,  
Through prosperous fields, bright-blazon'd fold on  
fold,  
One clear strong stream their glorious course they  
hold?

## VIII.

Sorrow, I have one word to sing to thee,  
So beautiful thou seemest : I would say  
That, ev'n as the dim twilight passeth day,  
So art thou fairer than all joys that be.  
A long time hast thou sojourn'd here with me,  
Dwelling in this deep soul, when no man thought ;  
And it is twilight there, and I can see  
The pure stars and the splendour noon hath not.  
Men do not love thee nor thy tearful face,  
Perceiving not the grace  
That from those downcast eyes doth meekly shine :  
They love their foolish pleasures—mirth and noise—  
But I love thee, and would no more rejoice,  
For thou art of the Silence—Be thou mine !

## IX.

O sing, sing, sing, O nightingale, sing on !  
None knowing why is it thou dost cry to God,  
Thus voiceful 'mid the voiceless all alone  
At midnight, with no gentle thing abroad.  
Singest at this still hour, that He may hear  
Far up thy frequent voice and none but thine ?  
Or is it sorrow moves thee ? dost thou pine  
For that earth is not purer, being so fair ?  
Or lovest thou for itself this quiet air ?  
Or hath the moon bewitched thee, 'scaped her cloud,  
With sad complaint and soon with laughter loud  
To mourn by turns and mock thine own despair ?—  
Whatever bids thee, sing till night is gone :  
I only am awake—sweet bird, sing on !

## X.

This is the charmèd hour and noon of night :  
A rich earth-fragrance rides upon the gale,  
Mingled with heaven's own dew, and moonbeams  
pale  
Float down, and flood the lawn with faery light.  
How loud the stillest day would seem, how bright  
The softest, to this hour of spirit-rest !  
See ! where above the black fir's slendering crest,  
In sky-abysses calm and infinite,  
Ever one star with pure and perfect ray  
Shines as through tears ! Far off the night-bird cries ;  
And low winds whisper of the glad surprise  
Of death, and regions very far away—  
While thou, poor Spirit, from this prison-clay  
May'st look and long, but hast no wings to rise.



## XI.

Soft lights on sleeping meadows, the first cry  
Of birds that break the hallow'd hush of dawn,  
Or leaping of white waves, or windy sky,  
With many a bold cloud-gesture over-drawn,  
Bright forest-glades, where springs the fearful fawn,  
And quiet noises all day long surprise,  
Laughter of sudden brook, or silent eyes  
Cluster'd in heaven, or wandering moon forlorn—  
If each of these with rare and several grace  
Do sometimes win my very heart away,  
Oh ! how to tell of her, in whose sweet face  
I count their sum of sweetness every day,  
And know each smile, each look of love, I see,  
Is true as heaven, and all for only me ?

## XII.

Death, and the pour'd-out fury of driven seas,  
Or a blind multitude madden'd by despair,  
Or winds that drag down forests by the hair,  
Until they howl for agony—before these  
Frail perishable flesh must quake and cower :  
Thus far with trembling knees  
We bow before great Nature's energies,  
Worshipping the resistlessness of Power.  
Thus far indeed, wild mob and seas and wind,  
Avails ungovernable Fury blind—  
Yet deem not this the highest ! as if man's soul  
Would stoop to tremble for her storm and shaking !—  
Man, that has learnt, all meaner force forsaking,  
The sublime strength that can itself control.

## XIII.

O thou that comest on earth to spoil and sting,  
More joyless from remember'd joys of Spring,  
Paler and sicklier for red Summer's health,  
And ten-fold fruitless after Autumn's wealth,  
Winter ! once more thou'rt with us on that fierce foot  
That stamps the swift stream to a marble slab,  
And from thy quiver the frozen lightnings stab  
Down through earth's armour to the deep tree-root.  
There is in all the world no flower or tune  
Where thou abidest, but barren hoar-frost white,  
And snow-blooms blown from heaven, till the aching  
light  
Has darken'd from swift noon to after-noon—  
Then lo ! the subtle-broider'd tent of Night,  
Full of gold buds and one white flower, the Moon !

## XIV.

Methinks my heart is cold and earthly grown,  
So little doth the sight of any tree,  
Or voice of winds that rave all night alone,  
Or glories of the mountain, profit me.  
The world becomes too wise : yet wiser far  
Was He that fixed in heaven yon burnish'd star,  
And thought to glad us with His morning-skies :  
But nothing now hath any new surprise ;  
Daylight is common, and the darkness naught ;  
We cannot read God's silence, as we ought,  
And Nature's voice falls oftenest on deaf ears—  
Yet can I sometimes lift enraptur'd eyes,  
And sometimes, too, divine immortal thought,  
Alone, upon a starry night, with tears.

## XV.

O brave sweet bird ! how dost thou lift my heart !  
Which singest on thy green bough above the snow—  
Thy one green bough, no frost can from thee part—  
To the dear Summer-months that lag so slow.  
“Be quick, be quick,” thou sayest, and yet I know  
Summer will come not for thy cry, but first  
Sad nights a-many, and sharp winds to and fro  
Devouring, in dark caves of Northland nurs’d ;  
And hail, not flowers ; and ice, not murmuring wave ;  
Low-flapping clouds for the high-tented heaven—  
All these for many a day, ere Spring be given !  
Yet Spring must come, thou sayest, sweet bird and  
brave !  
Think, Poet, to sing like this—how great it were !  
High-based on living thought, when all things else  
are bare.

## XVI.

Ye that inhabit there above the sea !  
In all our storms holy and silent still,  
My soul's soul from a place of boundless ill  
Springs to you, sorely travailing to be free.  
All night ye swim through heaven's immensity,  
Beholding that which is : nothing can kill,  
Or darkly blind you that ye should not see,  
On Goodness, Truth, and Love unspeakable  
Gazing enrapt—But I call from this Deep,  
Where nothing real abideth—a dark place  
Where Death is, and we cannot see God's face—  
Where Silence comes not, nor the rest of sleep.  
Yet, when mine eyes behold you, they can bless,  
They bless and strive to that high saintliness.

## XVII.

How pleasant through the long, dark winter-hour,  
When every pane is hoar with ferny rime,  
To dream dear Summer back, before her time,  
And fancy-paint the field with herb and flower !

On this bare thorn the budding roses blow ;  
And violet-eyes peep dark from yonder bank,  
Breathing their sweetness ; and still waters flow  
By never-ending cowslips, rank on rank :

The drowsy woodland scarce can sleep for song,  
Despite the hovering bee's low lullaby—  
Oh ! happy he, whose fancy can descry  
Whatever sweets to any hour belong !

For who the chain of stubborn Time can sever,  
He kings it upon earth, though crownèd never.

## XVIII.

Sweet Pity, sister's self to Charity,  
Come down and with us dwell : they would not miss  
Thy face in heaven, for heaven is full of bliss,  
As our poor Earth o'erflows with misery.  
Sweet Pity, come : we have such need of thee !  
Not each for self, but all for one-another :  
Thy name amongst us should be sister, mother,  
Or loving wife—the tenderest names that be.  
Thou, more than all thy peers, should'st cleave to  
Earth,  
Without whose weariness thou hadst not been,  
In whose quench'd brightness was thy brightness  
seen—  
For this fall'n star, a new star's glorious birth !  
Come then, for thine own sake, come quickly down !  
Thou that art least, yet most of all our own.



## XIX.

Man stands apart from Nature ; he is lord  
Of all that herein is, or seems to be :  
No beauty that he lacks can earth afford,  
No secret knows the immeasurable sea.

Our first experience from her lips we learn :  
Yet will she her own weakness not disguise,  
But lifts us in her arms, till we discern  
The unimagin'd, that beyond her lies.

Such is her task, and else she had not been :  
To this end the winds breathe and waters roll—  
Should our own fondness raise a barrier-screen,  
Or seek to bound the illimitable Soul,

Up Reason ! break the chain, fool-Fancy wrought,  
And strike into the very Vast of Thought.

## XX.

Dark Spirit, oh listen ! thou that fiercely flowest,  
So fierce, and so impatient to be gone !  
Is it fear, or some wild vengeance that thou owest ?  
Or doth the fiend of madness drive thee on ?  
Nay—for that stormy heart has been my own—  
Thou art full of glorious passion from the hills,  
And in thy strength goest forth to conquer ills,  
Not thinking how thou must be overthrown.  
Yet chafe not, noble river, nor seek to mend  
God's purpose in thee and thine own far end,  
Lest those proud waves o'erflow in sluggish mire :  
His be the grief, who would not brook control,  
Within whose heart has ceased the great desire,  
And stagnant are the waters of his soul.

## XXI.

How is it that so oft it sweeter seems  
To mourn lost bliss than win what yet may be,  
To sink absorb'd in melancholy dreams  
Far sweeter than to feast on mirth and glee,  
And solitude than all gay company,  
And winter, with her wind, than summer's beams,  
And dead cold ice than the dear living streams,  
And fallen leaves than green leaves on the tree ?—  
Is Sorrow in herself a thing divine,  
That we should take her for our utmost goal ?  
Or like a star's soft reflex on the soul  
Is it her semblance, not herself, doth shine ?  
Or does she lie far past our human sight,  
Strange as man's doom, and deep as day or night ?

## XXII.

From morn till noon here on this mountain-side  
In lonely meditation have I spent,  
Beholding three fair valleys winding wide,  
Beholding all, yet with no one content.  
And shall I ask my heart what here is meant ?—  
What fault or change, that it should beat so slow,  
Which used to bound in thought of such a show,  
Thrill'd through with wonder and with ravishment ?  
Or shall I bend my steps by yon sweet way  
Dark-opening on a land—perchance how fair ?—  
So, having found it, turn in grief away,  
Or satisfy my soul with beauties there ?  
Nay, let it rest unseen ! since dearer far  
Is the sweet doubt of what those beauties are.

## XXIII.

O stars, my silent teachers ! and thou, moon,  
That dost triumphant walk the wide heavens through,  
I have lov'd your glorious travels late and soon,  
Your still deep drownings in the waters blue :  
How is it that ye forsook me ? ye, that knew  
I could not join for ever all your joy !  
“ O come, while life is beautiful and new,  
Light-hearted child,” ye said, “ and merry boy : ”  
So evermore I shunned the world's annoy,  
And ever toward your silent blisses grew ;  
But ah ! though silent, plain ye speak, and well,  
Your unimpassion'd utterance of pure light ;  
Whilst I am dumb for ever—I may not tell  
What God has whisper'd in mine ear to-night.

## XXIV.

Love-time and flower-time for this year are dead—  
Bright wealth of Summer, and fervent pulse of  
Spring—

But thou art bleaker than sharp winds that shed  
The last frail feather from the warm year's wing.  
Ah ! well, 't is left to dream of and to sing ;  
We two shall gather no more flowers again,  
Nor watch the river leap like a living thing  
To catch the cold bright kisses of the rain,  
Then madden'd with insatiable desire  
Flash out among the rocks in foam like fire—  
But when we hear the unfed wind complain  
In barren hollows where are no more flowers,  
Each will remember that old love of ours  
Grown with the dead leaves a departed pain.

## XXV.

O calm great brows ! clear forehead unconfin'd !  
Fever'd by no day's heat nor dreams of night !  
Whose myriad perfect eyes absorbing light—  
The light indwelling of the eternal Mind—  
Sleep not, nor faint, with their high watch oppress'd—  
All truth, all beauty, like a land outspread  
Before them, and, beneath and overhead,  
That moving Order which is more than rest !—  
We are full of broken beauties ; with strong pain  
Here 'mid this finite throbs the infinite,  
Like pent-up fire that bursts the mountain's brain :  
Yet patient still, still waiting to attain  
Full stature for the flame's expanding might,  
We feed it, and we keep it burning bright.

## XXVI.

There is a peak that soars in silent air  
Silent, above the mountains, crown'd with cloud,  
Disrobed of sunrise, and of sunset bare—  
Upon whose neck the heav'ns are darkly bow'd :  
Far under chafe the waves of memory loud,  
Driving Man's feet to his last refuge there—  
Memory, whose stream, for ever flowing and fed,  
Fills the long desert and the drouth of Time  
With murmurs of the eternal watershed—  
Then, slowly swell'n to a pursuing flood,  
Deepens from solitude to solitude :  
But not the clamour of all her waves can climb  
To that calm refuge whither all men press—  
The silent forehead of Forgetfulness.



# A DIALOGUE.



PERSONS—

LADY JANE GREY.

FECKENHAM, *a Catholic Priest.*



TIME—*February, 1554.*



SCENE :—

*Lady Jane Grey's Apartment in the Tower.*



*Enter FECKENHAM.]*

FECKENHAM.

Madam, I bear no comfort on my tongue,  
But such as to some foundering bark a wave  
Brings, that puts hope out quite, yet ends not all,  
Charg'd but to sweep clean, salivate the prey  
For the sea's throat, before the last wave quench  
Hope, life, and all together.

LADY JANE GREY.

A plain tale, sir,  
Best savours plainly spoken—you are come  
To say that I must die.

FECKENHAM.

Indeed, 'tis so :  
Against the young Lord Guildford and your Grace  
The warrants are gone forth ; to-morrow's sun  
Illumines the sad missal of your life  
In its last page — How, Lady ! do you smile ?  
Is it so sweet and at your age, and thus  
Clean from the pale of Grace, past human hope,  
Body and soul belike, unshriven, to die ?  
Know you what death is ?

LADY JANE GREY.

Nay, sir, not to-night :  
Did you not say to-morrow I should know ?

To-night we are match'd in knowledge—mortals  
both :

To-morrow 'twill be different. Hath eye seen,  
Or ear heard, either heart of man conceived  
The things God hath prepared for them that love  
Him ?

## FECKENHAM.

Ay so ; but for the outcasts of the fold,  
Those on His left, the foolish strayaways,  
Know you another Scripture that must serve ?

## LADY JANE GREY.

Sir, for your tidings and good will I thank you,  
Yes, from my heart; you wish, I think, to snatch me  
Another brand from the burning : but pray see  
How vain to counsel me in this ! my faith  
You cannot shake : what comfort if you could ?

Old faiths unlearn'd and new faiths learn'd in a  
night?

Beseech you, leave me—I would be with Christ.

FECKENHAM.

'Tis thither I would bring you, even to Christ.

Leave you I dare not, lest Christ lose a soul

'Twas mine to have rescued. Lady, let me speak :

It is mine office to console and shrive.

Think you I have grown to fifty years God's priest,

Shrunk from no conflict, sicken'd at no toil,

Wrestling with Satan—Christ's ambassador,

With powers to bind or loose, remit, retain,

Learn'd therefore in His lore—a seer of souls—

Yet master'd no more of life's mysteries

Than your child-wisdom? Be not over-bold:

There stands the Door! The Porter waits your  
knock:

“ Whoso climbs up some other way,” saith He,  
“ The same is thief and robber.”

## LADY JANE GREY.

If to know much

Were to possess God's secret, that were yours ;  
Or if ripe age were wisdom, you were wise.  
But, sir, may it not be that all this while  
You, 'mid the clamour and clash of hostile creeds,  
Bred to do battle, flush'd with controversy,  
In the blind turmoil and pell-mell of fight  
Striking at who comes first—so press the plumes—  
Have, though the sword of the Spirit were in your  
    hands,  
Dinted and dimm'd it 'gainst the shield of Faith  
Borne past you by some seeming adversary,  
And 'mid the Babel-discord of debate  
Sought, but not always haply found the Lord ?

Whiles I, a woman, a mere child, if you will,  
Shy, simple student, shut from the world's noise,  
Learning of God from His own Word, without  
Much gloss of man's or added commentary,  
And from His works around me in the flowers,  
Looking on Nature, as a child is taught  
First by fair pictures, may have come more near  
That kingdom each must enter as a child ?

Also your plea of age I part put by,  
That you have liv'd more—must know more of life ;  
Well, if life mean prolong'd apprenticeship  
To hate, strife, all that makes it sad to live—  
Stumblings in stony ways where no light is,  
Tracking vain circles with laborious feet,  
Seeing through a glass but darkly, knowing in part,—  
If this be life, you are elder far than I :  
But if the crown and glory of old age be  
The approach of death, proximity to God,



Mine is the vantage there—the unearthly calm  
Of souls sequester'd by death's shadowing wings,  
An ear shut to the world's thrum, sharpen'd more  
To sounds from heaven, the finer film of flesh  
Pierced almost now by the glory that is to be—  
All these are mine, not yours. As for that Door  
You spake of, I have knock'd, am enter'd in.

## FECKENHAM.

What words are these—the topmost froth of madness!  
Mere bubbles blown and broken with a breath!  
Pestilent fumes from a distemper'd fancy!  
Physic you thus the death-wounds of a soul?  
Child! will it profit to have read God's word  
By the light of fancy—a rainbow of rosy foam  
Flung o'er the fountain of youth's heart?—Mistake  
Such phantom for the sun's effectual ray?  
Will you plead at God's bar, “Thy law seemed hard,

But for the tenderer faith that's taught of flowers ?”  
Go, sing it to thy lute ; seek some lone stream,  
And mix its warnings with the murmuring waves ;  
Turn from its terrors to soft skies, and sigh  
“ So will heaven seem :” but know for all these things  
God brings thee unto judgment. Hast thou faith ?

LADY JANE GREY.

In God the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost,  
Creator, Saviour, Sanctifier of all,  
So may His hand support, His blood wash clean,  
His Spirit comfort me, as I believe.

FECKENHAM.

Well then do you think mankind may come to God  
Through bye-ways, His appointed path denied ?—  
Honour the King, yet spurn his messengers ?—  
Trusting the main source, doubt the stream divine ?

## LADY JANE GREY.

Yes, for to meet it from men's haunts there haste  
A thousand throats, whose poisonous runnels pour  
From many an obscene source, till at the last  
They mix, and, gathering refuse as they go,  
Needs must discharge into the virgin bed,  
Augment and crown the perfect river of God.

Sir, there's a hill, the smoke-blind city loves,  
Soars to the very flush of the setting sun ;  
Green all his slopes with pasture, his bare head  
A shrine of solitude, where souls may live  
And worship with no temple-walls between.  
Thither, though sharp the ascent, narrow the track,  
Who trembles not may climb and cast all care  
'Mid wild goats bleating and grey great rocks, but all  
Sound of man's enterprise is banish'd far.  
Then come officious folk, call'd lords o' the land,  
Claim all the hill their own, bid loiterers pack,

Clear copse, blast rock, make the rough places plain,  
And at the last cry out in triumph, "Behold !  
No climbing more at peril of life and limb !  
See the brave road we have made, with terraced steps  
Where the stream rushed ! Hold by the rope, or, if  
you will,  
Speak, and, pence paid, we hoist you by the tram"—  
What must the lovers of the mountain say ?

## FECKENHAM.

So then you recognize no bond but this—  
Belief in God, His being, His attributes ;  
This is the sum and substance of your creed.  
All else—all powers, though by Himself conferr'd  
(As proved beyond doubt by miraculous signs)  
On those appointed to no end but this—  
Tradition of Christ's mysteries to men—  
The Church His bride, 'gainst whom the gates of hell

Prevail not, with the rock whereon 't was built,  
All laws, all ordinances, gifts of grace  
Through fifteen centuries surviving still,  
As null, void, inessential, you would waive—  
All the great golden chain cast loose, whereby  
God draws to heaven each separate link, a soul.  
Is faith alone sufficient ?

## LADY JANE GREY.

Faith alone,  
But for the hardness of men's hearts, exists not.  
To know God and believe, and there stop short,  
No fruit in act resulting, were a thing  
More monstrous false, more past impossible  
Than that the peerless sun should rise, shine, set,  
Flame his full circuit to the ends of heaven,  
Earth lying dark the while, her puny stars  
Twinkling and unaware ! why it were harder

For the fork'd fire-bolt to tear heaven in twain  
Nor the air applaud in thunder !—'tis mere words ;  
Faith without charity avails not, why ?

Why 'tis a mere phantasma—a goodly tree,  
But without stem, sap, branches, leaves, or fruit !

Sir, I remember—'twas seven years ago—  
I, ten years old, one summer eve lay down  
Tired of my games, and for the first time saw  
The sunset—That's a human word, but else  
How should I tell it ?—The sun that day had died  
A violent death, and in the sweat of flight  
Flung down, it seemed, his battle-robe lay there,  
Fleck'd and distain'd with blood, not trampled yet  
By the fierce hoofs of Night. I felt afraid  
Till I drew back my gaze eastward, and lo !  
No blood here, nor no colours, but the ghosts  
Of all dead colours, the spirits of slain shapes  
Fading and forming ! In a moment I perceived

This was God's beauty had dawned upon my soul  
Through the earthly senses first : all I had heard,  
Learnt, read, but scarce had hoped to understand,  
How God is strong, just, merciful, and mild,  
Sender of sorrows, and yet source of love—  
Flash'd and was truth within me—the dry bones lived!  
And as I pondered I became aware  
How wonderful a thing was mine own soul !  
No child more !—such an infinite bright birth  
Within me, as must henceforth having seen  
Love and be miserable away from God—  
One crystal drop as perfect though so small,  
As pure in its proportion and degree  
As the main ocean !—Doubtless God forgave  
That thought, so born of such an ecstasy.

Well well, mere madness ! but what I mean is this—  
When from a spirit's vision, howsoe'er  
Lighten'd, the mist fades, and the scales drop off,

And the bush burns before him ; when his feet  
Tremble because they stand on holy ground,  
And the new air is terrible and sweet  
About him, as the Lord is passing by,  
Then though the World, the Devil, and the Flesh—  
Though these three leagued together with all their hosts  
Swept from the four winds to abolish him,  
He should go up against them and prevail :  
Nor this alone ; not against evil only  
Stands he an instant and an eager foe ;  
But as the clear eye of some limpid pool  
Sweeps from its serene surface every mote  
And impure speck that taints it from the hills,  
Because 'tis meet the “ clarity of heaven ”  
Be shown there, or brave shape of passing cloud,  
Or gold star diving, or silver-splinter'd moon—  
So such a spirit henceforth—what things soe'er  
Are pure and lovely and of good report,



If there be any virtue, any praise—  
Thinks on these things. O sir! to be like God,  
We must reflect his nature, which is love :  
You cannot make the turbid stream paint heaven  
Through tunnels of bored stone or earthen duct,  
It must lie bare for that. What think you, Pope ?  
When did your second-hand salvation, say,  
Penance or pardons help one heart to love ?  
You cannot win a child's love by command ;  
We must see first before we can desire :  
Let God himself teach that, who draws us all  
By human cords and with the bands of love.  
Why should you stand between men's souls and God ?  
Surely one's own flesh makes it dim enough—  
His presence. Fear that we may see too much ?  
Why, sir, to see is to grow like Him ; that,  
That is the next world's glory : they are like Him  
Who see Him as He is.

FECKENHAM.

Yes, but remember,  
Of all true loves Obedience is the badge :  
Love else makes no more music than the loose  
Breath of some vagabond and lawless wind,  
Mere hollow blustering and blind desire,  
Which, prison'd in sweet pipes and timely stopped  
Had issued no mere rabble of wandering sounds,  
But school'd and temper'd to grave harmonies  
Meet for the Master's ear.

LADY JANE GREY.

Again I say,  
Your tongue shoots wide o' the mark. Love once  
inspir'd,  
Its range is infinite—all law we need  
So simple—to God first and then to man.  
This is the eternal rule of harmony ;

Not meant to straiten, but wide enough wherein  
Each separate soul may pour itself in praise  
To God for ever. Your multiplied restraints  
Impede the player, not modulate the tone,  
Assign false limits, contract the scale, and bring  
The whole world's great exuberance of song  
To one dull murmur of mechanic sound.

## FECKENHAM.

Once claim such freedom, and all bounds disappear.  
Prove the Church human and her foundation sand,  
Show flaw in the fabric—there's no force in earth  
Shall reconstruct the sunder'd elements  
Into a power which may convert the world.  
Why else at all design'd, but that Christ knew  
The bias of man's own heart his natural bane,  
His sovereign need enthron'd Authority,  
A supreme arbiter, whence no appeal ?

Men's aims are variable, God's purpose one :  
Except his fiat be cogent to compel  
Unquestioning obedience, there's an end.  
Man's will steps into rivalry with God's ;  
And the new freedmen, cautiously at first,  
But by degrees grown masterful, throw off  
The yoke of their old burdens, in whose place  
They will set up as God, and worship it,  
This demon of Free-thought, which pricked them  
first

To such high daring ; and for a creed they'll spin  
Some subtle network of the curious brain,  
Some metaphysic film too weak to bear  
The rude fall of a single bolt of fate.  
From that day forth I seem in spirit to see  
All Israel scatter'd on the hills as sheep  
Having no shepherd : the hosts of the profane,  
Unshamefast and triumphant and malign,

Ride down the people and possess the spoil !  
Hail Antichrist ! Apostate thousands swell  
Thy cohorts ; I see Redemption made a scoff,  
The Cross a scorn, and Faith's clear certainty  
Starv'd to the waning comfort of a dream !  
O Lord ! is this the intolerable end ?  
Better the world still bowed and clave to Baal,  
Chemosh and Moloch and the Lord of flies !

But ye, so careful to add naught hereto,  
Look ye diminish not from Christ's commands.  
Say all you can, this yet remains to say—  
“ We build upon Christ's very words, the same  
You disregard or garble.” Take one plain word—  
Something or nothing—and interpret which :  
“ This is my body which is given for you.”  
How must we read that saying ?

LADY JANE GREY.

The sequel knits

The sense up, and shows all : “ do this,” he adds,

“In memory of me.”—No juggler’s sleight,  
Seeing that His body was whole before them there !  
Men do not eat the last dear lock that keeps  
The memory of dead friends, much less their flesh,  
Were it possible. To eat Christ’s flesh were to pluck  
Away one’s own redemption, and make vile  
And of cheap worth what cost so deadly dear.  
Fool—Pharisees ! blind leaders of the blind !  
Doth not Himself say that which entereth in  
Defiles not, though unclean, the heart of a man ?  
How should the clean then purify ? Man’s soul  
Exists on God, not by material food :  
God is a Spirit, and they that worship Him  
Must worship Him in spirit and in truth.

See how ye wrest the Scriptures to your will !—  
Ravel five threads out from the quaint-wrought web  
Which in the pictur’d arras present a sword,  
Christ holds in act to sheathe ; and, severing so

The dry dead body of the thing from its idea,  
Cry, "who asks warrant, behold the naked blade  
His hand grasped! Do ye fear to flesh it now?  
So perish all His enemies!"—meanwhile  
Forgetful of the curse upon the scroll—  
"All they that take shall perish by the sword."  
How would Christ meet your Grand Inquisitor?  
Methinks upon that sea of martyr'd blood  
Sailing, and in a boat of human bones,  
Wafted by wailings of the souls he slew  
Red Torquemada comes to claim his crown:  
There stands the Christ! but Oh! what heavy cheer!  
What worlds of sadness in the eyes' regard!  
"Have I not battled all my life for Thee,  
Till the hands wearied and the blade waxed dull  
Slaughtering Thy foes?"—"Mine! whom I died to  
save!  
My little ones that loved me!"—Then He knows.

O sir! you came to turn me : be you turn'd  
Instead ; cleave not to such a Church as that !  
Infallible, no doubt : but what of those  
Poor sheep she cuts the throat of ? 'Tis your way  
To save—I know it : well, Christ's way was to die.

## FECKENHAM.

Herein frail human judgment, that bruis'd reed,  
You leant on, breaks and fails you : Faith alone,  
Where men see naught but darkness, lends her ray.  
Yet, look you, to live at ease on the earth awhile,  
Exempt from fleshly pain—get wealth and spend it—  
Be what the world calls fortunate, and live  
Careless the thing that men call life, belike  
Dying the while,—all this is no such matter  
A man should fear the loss of, who thereby  
Cuts short the awful after-reckoning.  
Who shall reprove Him ? Who contend with Him ?



Not alway of old, His right arm stretch'd to save,  
With gift of manna and gush of waters sweet  
Led He His people through the wilderness ;  
Nay, but with outpour'd fury, with fiery flight  
Of serpents, nay, with the earthquake's living doom,  
With pestilence, plague, flames, He chastened them,  
Till Moses wondered ! Was it for Israel even  
So deep, so deadly a sin to disobey ?  
God's ways are not as our ways, nor His eye  
Straiten'd within the scope of mortal ken,  
For us to arraign Him. Yet durst thou impute  
To Love's veil'd face the murderous hues of hate,  
To Justice the foul crimes of erring men,  
To stern Necessity, that sword of God,  
Lust's hot excess and bloody banquetings.

But now no more : I have cherish'd a fool's hope,  
Spent but waste breath and offer'd fruitless prayer,  
Seeking to save you ; not the less my heart

Trembles for, sorrows o'er you, lost so young.  
Whether the eternal God may temper so  
His judgment with forbearance that this sharp  
Quick shutting of the door on life and hope,  
This sudden short'ning of your April-prime  
With ruin of all possible fair buds  
To be, which haply coming showers had woo'd,  
Killing the canker, into blooms mature—  
Whether, I say, your strange fate plead for you,  
Arrest the scale of vengeance, that it pause  
In its declining, and your soul escape  
His uttermost damnation, fire and worm—  
I know not, nor have warranty to hope.

LADY JANE GREY.

Waste neither hopes at all nor fears on me,  
Stern priest, for they are vain : your whole life long  
You have starved your soul on barren husks of truth

Fit but for swine ; and when it would arise,  
Go to its father, you have chain'd it down  
With ceremonious forms : for your heart's springs  
You have dug channels deep, and straiten'd them  
In ways that are not God's—Now must you needs  
As from God's throne look down with pity on me !  
You, blindfold, with both eyes persistently  
Shut fast, take pity ! presume in fatuous pride  
To cheer with prospect of night's vanishing  
One that with upturn'd gaze already drinks,  
And only lacks eyes large enough to drain,  
The glut of the noon's glory ! There's enough  
Trouble on earth, God knows, and care enough,  
Sick hearts and trembling, and moving of wild arms  
Blindly 'mid darkness such as may be felt :  
There let your rush-light glimmer, and there let flow  
All your heart's pity ; for I will none of it.  
Were it whole rivers, which now is but a drop—

That pity of yours—still is not Christ's the sea ?  
Have you not spent one hour with threats to scare  
Whom His whole life He gave with love to win ?  
When did the world not woo His enemies ?  
And shall He tend not whom the world forsakes ?—  
Look ye, the world and thou a speck upon it  
Dwindle, diminish, darken, whiles I speak ;  
I am drawn—drawn nearer ! I rush into the sun !  
Haste, have you more to say ? your form grows dim,  
Your words the wailing of an empty wind !

## FECKENHAM.

Madam, my say is said : I have cast my pearls  
Before one that has trod them underfoot.  
Mine be the folly, on your own head the guilt ;  
The hour of grace is past—I am well assured  
We two shall meet no more.

[*Exit.*

LADY JANE GREY.

. . . . "After the wind

An earthquake ; but the Lord was not in the earthquake ;

And after the earthquake a fire ; but the Lord was not  
In the fire ; and after the fire a still small voice."





L' ENVOI.

---

*Go, little bark ! be buoyant, brave ;  
I've launch'd thee on a stormier main  
Than ever closed o'er seaman's grave,  
Or deeply drank the hoarded gain.*

*It may be to thy fair renown  
Some favourable breeze will blow,  
Or else " the gulfs may wash thee down "—  
Well, there are nobler freights below.*

*It may be—nay, but thou art frail,  
And scarce canst stem the boisterous wave,  
And many a broader prow might fail  
The sinking castaway to save.*

*It may be that, when eve is nigh,  
Some watcher on a lonely isle  
May lift his eyes before he die,  
And think of home again, and smile :*

*If he forget a moment's pain,  
To track thy flight across the sun,  
Be glad thou wert not all in vain,  
Then vanish, for thy day is done.*





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